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# Message Text

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45
ACTION AID-31

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EA-04 EB-05 IGA-02 L-03 INR-10 /056 W
---------- 024399
P 101110 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1217

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 4489

AIDAC

SUBJECT: POL CHARTERS

REFS: ( A) STATE 085509; ( B) PHNOM PENH 4139

1. SINCE SENDING OF REF ( B) AND RECEIPT OF REF ( A), THE SECURITY SITUATION ON THE MEKONG HAS NOT IMPROVED. FYI. ALL VESSELS OF THE LAST CONVOY WERE ATTACKED AND SUFFERED DAMAGE BOTH COMING UP TO PHNOM PENH AND GOING DOWNRIVER. VIRA I ESPECIALLY SUFFERED, CATCHING ON FIRE AND HAD TO BE ABANDONED AND IT WAS ONLY DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL LUCK THAT THE FIRE WAS EXTINGUISHED AND VESSEL NEXT DAY FINALLY FINISHED THE TRIP TO PHNOM PENH END OF FYI.

2. NATURALLY, THE SITUATION HAS REFLECTED ITSELF IN THE DIMINISH-ING WILLINGNESS OF TANKER OWNERS TO PROCEED UP THE MEKONG UNLESS PAID HIGHER FREIGHT. WE HAVE NOW A RESUME OF THE TANKER OWNER S' DEMANDS INDICATING REQUESTS FOR FREIGHT INCREASED RANGING FROM 14.8 PERCENT TO 74.5 PERCENT DEPENDING ON THE TANKER OWNER, PRODUCT AND ROUTE. THE HIGHER PERCENTAGE INCREASE PERTAINS TO HIGHLY INFLAMMABLE PRODUCTS SUCH AS MOGAS, AVGAS AND JP-4. AS MENTIONED IN REF ( B) THE PRICE INCREASES WILL BE APPLICABLE TO THE EXTENSION OF THE PRESENT CONTRACTS FOR THREE MONTHS.
SUBSEQUENTLY
A CALL FOR BIDS FOR A NEW ONE YEAR CONTRACT WILL BE ISSUED.

3. THE SITUATION HAS BECOME MORE CRITICAL BECAUSE ONLY FIVE TANKERS OUT OF THE ORIGINAL TEN ARE PRESENTLY AVAILABLE FOR SERVICE. OF THE REMAINING FIVE, THREE ARE BEING REPAIRED WHICH WILL DELAY
RQER AVAILABILITY FROM FIVE TO TWENTY DAYS, ONE HAS
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NO CREW ( A NEW CREW IS BEING RECRUITED AND HOPEFULLY WILL BE AVAILABLE BY THE TIME THE NEXT CONVOY IS DUE WHICH IS MAY 16) AND ONE WAS SUNK. TELA KHMER IS TRYING TO SECURE SERVICES OF ADDITIONAL TANKERS. IT HAS ALREADY RECEIVED AN OFFER FOR ONE TANKER WHICH COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE WITHIN THIRTY DAYS UNDER THE INCREASED RATES. AN ADDITIONAL TUG WITH TWO BARGES MAY BE AVAILABLE BUT ONLY UNDER A TIME CHARTERCONTRACT AS COMPARED TO THE PER VOYAGE PER CM CHARTERS INSISTED UPON BY AID/ W. OFFEROR IS LUSTEVECO WHICH DEMANDS $800 PER DAY FOR THE TUN AND $1600 PER DAY FOR EACH BARGE OF 1600 CM CAPACITY.

4. THERE IS ALMOST NO POSSIBILITY THAT THE TANKERS CAN BE SECURED FOR LOWER RATES, EVEN THOUGH TELA KHMER IS STILL NEGOTIATING WITH THE TANKER OWNERS. IT APPEARS THAT THE TANKER OWNERS PROPOSAL WAS MADE ON A TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT BASIS. AS BOTH EMBASSY AND AID/ W REALIZE THAT THE NEED FOR THE SERVICE IS IMPERATIVE, WE WOULD APPRECIATE AID/ W' S APPROVAL ASAP.
GDS.
SWANK

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NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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